REMARKS

Claims 1, 7 and 10-11 have been amended, and Claims 19-40 have been withdrawn. Accordingly, Claims 1-18 are pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Restriction Requirement

Applicants hereby elect the invention of Group A, Claims 1-18 for examination. Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application for the non-elected claims (Group B, Claims 19-40).

Allowable Claims

Claims 12-18 were allowed over the prior art.

In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that Claims 7-9 and 11 would be allowable if rewritten to include all the limitations of the base claim. Accordingly, Claims 7 and 11 have been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim, and are now in condition for allowance.

Claims 8 and 9, which are dependent on Claim 7, are now in condition for allowance along with the parent Claim 7.

Section 103(a) Rejection

Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Multer (U.S. Patent No. 6,671,757) in view of Clifton (U.S. Patent No. 5,331,591).

Claim 1, as now presented, recites that each of said record contain at least one field containing data and a reserve area for accommodating changes, said input vertical stack processor allowing individual records to grow horizontally by using reserved unused space and vertically by adding records to the set without requiring all existing

MW1095395:ATP:DMM

users to make synchronized changes. As can be seen, Claim 1 further refines the record to include a reserved area for accommodating changes (see Applicants' Specification, page 4, lines 4-14). This facilitates horizontal growth of each record. Further, vertical growth is included by implementing changes for one user with no effect on the remaining users (see Applicants' Specification, page 4, lines 25-35). Other members of the community of users are free to adapt to changes in their own time frame (see Applicants' Specification, page 5, lines 1-2). In other words, the invention of Claim 1, allows data sources to ignore changes or implement changes when convenient so that the changes can be implemented with minimum affect on the user (see Applicants' Specification, page 2, lines 31-34).

In contrast, Multer teaches the exact opposite, a data transfer and synchronization system in which a data store is couple to the network to store the difference information between two different systems. The data store stores the difference information as a separate file. Thus, Multer does not teach a reserved space within a record to accommodate change. Further, Multer does not teach vertical growth in which users of a community are not required to make synchronized changes.

Clifton, as stated by the Examiner, was cited merely to show a vertical stack processor. Clifton does not teach or suggest a reserved space with a record to accommodate change and horizontal and vertical growth of the records.

In view of the distinctions noted and the advantages attendant thereto, it is respectfully submitted that neither Multer nor Clifton, whether taken singly or combined, teach or suggest each and every limitation of independent Claim 1. It is submitted that Claim 1 clearly distinguishes over Multer and Clifton and is believed to be patentable thereover. Therefore, Applicant respectfully assert that the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn.
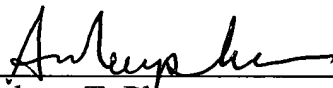
Claims 2-6, which are dependent upon Claim 1, are believed to be patentable along with parent Claim 1.

MW1095395:ATP:DMM

Claim 10, as now presented, includes a similar limitation as Claim 1 and is patentable for the same reasons given above.

In summary, Claims 1-18 are believed to be allowable for the reasons given herein. Accordingly, these claims remain pending following entry of this Amendment, and are believed to be in condition for allowance at this time. As such, Applicants respectfully request entry of the present Amendment and reconsideration of the application, with an early and favorable decision being solicited. Should the Examiner believe that the prosecution of the application could be expedited, the Examiner is requested to call Applicant's undersigned representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted:

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MW1095395:ATP:DMM